[Dung Pham]

[Name of Instructor]

[Philosophy]

[May 29, 2019]

The Reflection on The Analects of Confucius

# Introduction

Philosophy is a strange branch of study. It assimilates several kinds of ideologies in it, and yet they maintain their own distinct sense of individuality. Philosophy is the enlightenment of the mind, and living with accordance to the living traditions of the time. Most authors claim that philosophy dug its roots in the Athens, the civic-center of the Greek civilization. Undoubtedly, no one can deny the contributions of the most original philosopher Plato who carried on the process of his master Socrates. Plato’s Republic, Statesman and the Laws created an indelible impact on the world, and so is the case with his student, Aristotle, and his masterpiece Politics. Aristotle emerged as the first political scientist in the world. However, this progress of philosophy is not limited to the European continent only. Several other ideologies have left their mark on the study of philosophy, and it can be well associated with Confucian ideology, which imparted its own sense of morality into the study of philosophy. The Confucian ideology is well- represented in the book Analects of Confucius. It is an old school classic and packed with old school wisdom. Great ideas are the essence of this masterpiece. This book focuses on the concepts of good thoughts, practice, good government and the need of decorum and fairness in life.

# Discussion

This book was not written in a short span of time. It is a masterpiece of literature that entails several diversified moral lessons. Morality is not an easy philosophy as morals are relative, and change their nature and spirit according to the context they are present in. So, developing such universal lessons of morality that have widespread applicability was a gigantic task. Hence, this task took around thirty to thirty-five years to complete. Moreover, the chapters in Analects are not in a sequence, and there are several versions of the Analects as well. This is, perhaps, due to the existence of several dynasties in china namely: the Han dynasty and Qi dynasty. This variety of versions makes some people opine that this literary piece is not written by a single author, however, this claim is yet to be verified. Despite whatever is being touted against the versions, there is no denying the fact that this book has a huge influence on Chinese ideals and its contemporary modus-operandi. Even other East Asian countries are affected by the morals of the noble preacher-Confucius. They are followed in the Chinese education system as well, where Confucius’ morals have become a part and parcel of the learning mechanism.

In this book, when Confucius was asked to present a gist of all his teachings, he stated, “let there be no evil in your thoughts.” This is such great idea if one wants to purify one’s own self. Confucius gave a simple remark that purity must start with the purification of one’s thoughts. The point is that when a person doesn’t think negatively, they want the good of others. This process advances his own personality, and he becomes a better version of his own self. This is the same lesson as revealed in other important scriptures of the world such as the religious book (*The Dhammapada*), which states that lives are shaped by the thoughts of the person. This is immensely important as whatever one thinks has a huge impact on his own self. A person become the reflection of his thoughts. This is the ruling ideal in the modern contemporary world, as the world is now following the edict of the Law of Attraction. It is even illustrated in the bestseller book (Byrne) that one’s thought are powerful enough to trigger the set of circumstances in his life. If one is occupied in negative thoughts, one will attract negativity. On the other hand, if one is optimistic and has a promising attitude towards life, one will have much better prospects in his life. Hence, the power of thoughts is revealed in the Analects of Confucius.

Furthermore, the Analects of Confucius reveal that practice is mandatory before preaching anything to the world. This is the lesson in the Confucian ideology that one should not preach what one does not follow himself whole-heartedly. It is commonly witnessed that people don’t practice themselves what they preach openly. Besides, they are more inclined to see the faults in others every now and then. This is the same concept of the shadow self as highlighted by Debbie Ford in her work (*Revealing The Secrets Of Your Shadow Self*). She dwells on the point that when one points fingers at others for doing or not doing something, the other three fingers point back at one’s own self. So, one’s own adherence to that practice is the essence of this Confucian ideal of practice before preaching.

Confucius also dwells on the concept of justice and good government. He is the one who gave the idea that rulers must be just in their approach towards their people. The master should not behave arbitrarily or in a capricious manner. He is to be such a leader who focuses much on the concept of social welfare and justice in the society. Perhaps, this is the ideal that is common in socialism, which is a ruling system in communist countries. This socialistic idea is also mentioned by Marx and Engels. Karl Marx stated that, “from each according to his ability to each according to his need.” This is widespread concept of justice is prevalent in socialist countries that are followers of the Analects of Confucius.

Decorum and fairness are also trademarks of the Analects of Confucian. Here, the philosopher Confucius elaborates on the point that proper dignity is the essence of every noble deed. There should be no pomposity involved in the actions of individuals, and this is especially valid for those holding the higher ranks in the country. They must be fair and dignified in their character. This is a landmark of Confucius’ teaching, “hide your strength, and bide your time.” this is the advice of the preacher Confucius to the leaders that they must not be too confrontational and must respect human dignity and peace in their intercourse. Perhaps this concept is still widely applied in the Peoples’ Republic of China where its leaders avoid violent confrontations with their enemies. Hence, decorum and fairness have an adequate place in the Confucian ideology.

# Conclusion

In a nutshell, it may be fairly concluded from the above discussion that the Analects of Confucius is a literary masterpiece that is still widely applicable today in the modern globalized world. It is still popular in the world where mutually assured destruction is practiced as operational doctrine by some states. This masterpiece of morality and ethics depicts how to live life in a better way. It focuses on the concept of thoughts and a practice before preaching approach. Also, it elaborates the concept of good government and the notions of justice that must be employed by the masters of the land. Moreover, it sheds pomposity and adheres to the ideal of decorum and fairness in this world of nuclear weapons and animosity. This is undoubtedly a great contribution to the world of philosophy.

# Works Cited

Byrne, Rhonda. *The Secret*. Atria Books/Beyond Words, 2007.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. Foreign Languages Press, 1972.

*Revealing The Secrets Of Your Shadow Self*. http://www.healyourlife.com/revealing-the-secrets-of-your-shadow-self. Accessed 29 May 2019.

*The Dhammapada*. Penguin Books Limited, 2010.